

**DOMUS AUREA**



# DOMUS AUREA

Poems for The Virgin Mary

by

AUBREY DE VERE

Selected and edited

by

Phillip Medhurst M.A. Oxon

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

*John 1:14*

in memory of my mother  
Nessie Ann Bacon  
1910–1981

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[phillip.medhurst@gmail.com](mailto:phillip.medhurst@gmail.com)

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CODA by the editor





**DOMUS AUREA***Proverbs 9:1*

“Wisdom hath built herself a House,  
And hewn her out her pillars seven;”  
Her wine is mixed, her guests are those  
Who share the harvest-home of heaven.

The fruits upon her table piled  
Are gathered from the Tree of Life;  
Around are ranged the undefiled,  
And those that conquered in the strife.

Who tends the guests? Who smiles away  
Sad mem’ries? bids misgiving cease?  
A crowned one count’nanced like the day:  
The mother of the Prince of Peace!



## **PART 1: A HIDDEN LIFE**



## PROLOGUE

### I

Ere yet mankind was made; ere yet  
The sun and she that rules the night  
Were in their heavenly stations set,  
God's Sons were playing in His sight.

Age after age those armies vast  
In winding line had upward flown,  
Yet ne'er their shadows higher cast  
Than on the first step of the Throne;

And downward through th'unsounded space  
If those had sunk who soared above  
They ne'er had found the buried base  
Of Godhead's condescending Love.

Then He, the God Who made them, proved:  
For, high and higher as they soared  
Hymning the Eternal Son beloved  
The God from God, and Lord from Lord,

He showed them, in that form decreed,  
Their God made man, man's hope and trust –  
“The Woman,” and “The Woman's Seed”  
He showed; th'Unbounded bound in dust.

As when from some world-conqu'ring height  
The shepherd sees, ere risen the sun,  
His advent clothe the cloud with light,  
Before them thus that Vision shone:

And while, in wonder half, half fear,  
That Child, that Mother fixed their eye,  
He bade those heavenward hosts revere  
Their God in His humility.

Set was that Infant as a sign:  
In endless bliss confirmed were they  
Who hailed that hour the Babe Divine;  
Self-sentenced those who turned away.

## PROLOGUE

### II

Their trial past, more near the Throne,  
And rapt thenceforth to holier skies,  
Still on that Maid and Babe foreshown  
The elect of angels fixed their eyes.

A spirit-galaxy they hung;  
Cross unmeasured, limned in fire  
And instinct-shaped, that swayed and swung  
On winds of unfulfilled desire.

They worshipped Him, that God made Man;  
To Him they spread their hands in power:  
Unmarked the exhausted centuries ran:  
That trance millennial seemed an hour.

Twixt finite things and infinite  
They saw the patriarch's ladder thrown;  
Saw One Who o'er it moved in light:  
They saw, and knelt with foreheads prone.

Make answer, sinless angels, say,  
Ye who that hour your God adored:  
Less strong, less dear, is she this day,  
That Mother of your destined Lord?

# THE PROTO-EVANGELIUM

*Genesis 3:15*

## I

When from their lurking place the Voice  
Of God dragged forth that fallen pair,  
Still seemed the Garden to rejoice:  
The sinless Eden still was fair.

They, they alone, whose light of grace  
But late made Paradise look dim,  
Stood now a blot upon its face,  
Before their God, nor gazed on Him.

They glanced not up, or they had seen  
In that severe, death-dooming Eye  
Unutterable depths serene  
Of sadly-piercing sympathy.

Not them alone that Eye beheld,  
But, by their side, that other twain  
In whom, the race whose doom was knelled  
Once more should rise, once more should reign.

It saw that Infant crowned with blood  
And her from whose predestined breast  
That Infant ruled the worlds. She stood  
Her foot upon the serpent's crest!

Voice of primeval prophecy!  
Of all the Gospels head and heart!  
With Him, her Son and Saviour, she  
Possessed, that hour, in thee a part!



## THE PROTO-EVANGELIUM

## II

Her foot is on the Lord of Night:  
On Heaven, not him, are fixed her eyes:  
That foot is, as a lily, light;  
Not less that serpent writhes and dies!

O Eve, he dies! That tempter fell!  
Earth! – that the pest, whose poison-spume  
Exasperates with fires of hell  
Thy blood envenomed, meets his doom!

But whence the conquering puissance? Lo!  
That Woman clasps the “Woman's Seed:”  
That Infant quells the infernal foe:  
Messiah triumphs: His the deed!

The weight she feels not she transmits:  
The weight of worlds her arms sustains:  
Who made the worlds, in heaven Who sits,  
Through her that foe hath touched and slain!

## THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

### I

Eternal Beauty – ere the spheres  
 Had rolled from out the gulfs of night,  
 Sparkled, through all th'unnumbered years  
 Before the Eternal Father's sight –

Truth's solemn reflex, not a dream,  
 Created Wisdom's smile unpriced:  
 Before His eyes it hung, a gleam  
 Flashed from th'Eternal Thought of Christ.

It hung, th'unbodied antitype  
 Of all creation shapes and sings;  
 That finite world which time makes ripe,  
 Which Uncreated Light enring.

Star-like within the depths serene  
 Of that still vision, Mary, thou  
 With Him, thy Son, of God wert seen  
 Millenniums ere the lucid brow

Of Eve o'er Eden founts had bent,  
 Millenniums ere that second Pair  
 With shame the hopes of man had blent,  
 Had stained the brightness once so fair.

Elect of Creatures! Man in thee  
 Beholds that primal Beauty yet;  
 Sees all that Man was formed to be,  
 Sees all that Man can ne'er forget!

## THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

### II

Could she, that Destined One, could she  
On whom His gaze was stayed for aye  
Transgress like Eve? partake that Tree?  
Become, like her, the Dragon's prey?

Had He no Pythian shaft that hour  
Her Son, her God, to pierce that foe  
Which strove her greatness to devour –  
Eclipse her glories? Deem not so!

He saw her in that first decree:  
He saw the assailant, sent the aid:  
Filial it was, His love for thee,  
Ere thou wert born, ere worlds were made.

**THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION****III**

Met in a point the circles twain  
Of temporal and eternal things  
Embrace, close linked. Redemption's chain  
Drops thence to earth its myriad rings.

In either circle, from of old  
That point of meeting stood decreed;  
Twin myst'ries cast in one deep mould:  
"The Woman" and "the Woman's Seed."

Mary! – long ages ere thy birth  
Resplendent with Salvation's Sign,  
In thee a stainless hand the earth  
Put forth to meet the Hand Divine!

The Word made Flesh, the Way, the Door,  
The Link that dust with Godhead blends!  
Through Him the worlds their God adore,  
Through thee that God to man descends.

## MARY'S NATIVITY

WHEN thou wert born the murmuring world  
 Rolled on, nor dreamed of things to be –  
 From joy to sorrow madly whirled:  
 Despair disguised in revelry.

A princess thou of David's line,  
 The mother of the Prince of Peace,  
 That hour no royal pomps were thine:  
 The earth alone her boon increase

Before thee poured. September rolled  
 Down all the vine-clad Syrian slopes  
 Her robes of purple and of gold,  
 And birds sang loud from olive tops.

Perhaps old foes, they knew not why,  
 Relented. From a fount long sealed  
 Tears rose, perhaps, to Pity's eye.  
 Love-harvests crowned the barren field.

The respirations of the year,  
 At last grew soft. O'er valleys wide  
 Pine-roughened crags again shone clear,  
 And the great Temple, far descried,

To watchers watching long in vain,  
 To patriots grey in bondage nursed,  
 Flashed back their hope: "The second fane  
 In glory shall surpass the first!"

## MARY'S CHILDHOOD

O wearied Souls by earth beguiled,  
Round whom the world's enthrallments close,  
Look back on her that three-years' child,  
Who first the life conventual chose!

A nun-like veil was o'er her thrown,  
Her locks by fillet-bands made fast.  
Swiftly she climbed the steps of stone,  
Into the Temple swiftly passed.

Not once she paused her breath to take;  
Not once cast back a homeward look:  
As longs the hart his thirst to slake  
When noontide rages, in the brook,

So longed that child to live for God;  
So pined, from earth's enthrallments free,  
To bathe her wholly in the flood  
Of God's abysmal purity!

Anna and Joachim from far  
Their eyes on that white vision raised;  
And when, like caverned foam or star  
Cloud- hid, she vanished, still they gazed.

**WHOLLY BEAUTIFUL**

A broken gleam on wave and flower,  
A music that in utterance dies,  
A redd'ning leaf, a falling shower:  
Behold that beauty which we prize!

And ah! how oft corruption works  
Through that brief beauty's force or wile!  
How oft a gloom eternal lurks  
Beneath an evanescent smile!

But thou, serene and smiling light  
Of every grace to man benign,  
In thee all harmonies unite;  
All minstrelsies of Truth are thine.

Of old whate'er to mind or heart  
Was dear had leave with thee to rest:  
The little birds of every art  
Hung on thy fane their procreant nest.

## THE QUEEN OF PEACE

In silence, like a ridge of snows  
 Slow reared in lands for ever calm,  
 On Sion's brow the Temple rose;  
 In stillness grew as grows the palm.

Far off, on ridges vapour-draped,  
 Was hewn and carved each destined stone;  
 Far off the axe the cedars shaped  
 Upon their native Lebanon.

So rose that Temple, holier far:  
 Incarnate Godhead's sacred shrine.  
 Round her there swelled no din of war:  
 The peace that girt her was divine.

The deep foundations of that fane  
 Were laid ere lived the hills and seas  
 In many a dread, unquarried vein  
 Of God's deep Will, and fixed Decrees.

High Queen of Peace! Her God possessed,  
 Her heart could feel no earthly want:  
 His kingdom, 'stablished in her breast,  
 Triumphant was, not militant:

And day by day more amply played  
 His love about its raptured thrall  
 Like some eternal sunset stayed  
 On cliff rich-veined, or mountain wall.



**THE CEDAR OF LEBANON***Ecclesiasticus 24*

Behold! I sought in all things rest;  
My Maker called me: I obeyed;  
On me He laid His great behest,  
In me His tabernacle made.

The world's Creator thus bespake  
"My Salem be thy heritage;  
Thy rest within mine Israel make;  
In Sion root thee, age by age."

Within the City well-beloved  
Thenceforth I grew from flower to fruit,  
And in an ancient race approved  
Behold – thenceforth I struck my root.

Like Carmel's cedar, or the palm  
That gladdens 'mid Engaddi's dew,  
Or Plane-tree set by waters calm  
I stood, and round my fragrance threw.

Behold! I live where dwells not sin:  
I breathe in climes no foulness taints:  
I reign in God's fair court, and in  
The full assembly of His saints.

## THE SPIRITUAL BRIDE

As though, fast-borne the hills along,  
At dawn some shepherd girl or boy  
Should wrestle with the lark in song  
And, shaft for shaft, retort his joy,

So walked, the hills of Truth above,  
The bride elect, the sinless maid;  
So, challenged by th'all-heavenly Love  
Th'all-heavenly Lover's voice repaid.

From zenith heights incessant fell  
On her His grace like sunny rain:  
Unvanquished and invincible  
Her heart repaid that golden grain.

Perchance, in many an instant gleam  
She caught, unscorched and unabashed,  
That vision of the Face supreme  
Which on her first-born spirit flashed!

Diseased are we: th'infectious fire  
Corrupts our life-blood from our birth.  
She, she was like the unfallen sire,  
Compacted out of virgin earth.

In God she lived; His world she trod;  
Saw Him and His; saw nought beside.  
He only lives who lives in God:  
That hour when Adam fell, he died.

**THE PRAYERFUL ONE**

She mused upon the saints of old;  
Rock-like, on rock she stood, foot-bare;  
On Him she mused, that Child foretold;  
To Him she held her hands in prayer –

Unwavering hands that, drawing fires  
Of grace from heaven, our earth endowed  
With heavenly breath like mountain spires  
That suck the lightning from the cloud.

No moment passed without its crown;  
And each new grace was used so well  
It dragged some tenfold talent down,  
Some miracle on miracle.

O Golden House! O boundless store  
Of wealth by heavenly commerce won!  
When God Himself could give no more,  
He gave thee all; He gave His Son!

**THE HUMBLE ONE**

Not all thy purity, although  
The whitest moon that ever lit  
The peaks of Lebanonian snow  
Shone dusk and dim compared with it;

Not that great love of thine whose beams  
Transcended in their virtuous heat  
Those suns that melt the ice-bound streams  
And make earth's pulses newly beat;

It was not these that from the sky  
Drew down to thee the Eternal Word:  
He looked on thy humility;  
He knew thee, "Handmaid of thy Lord."

Let no one claim with thee a part,  
Let no one, Mary, name thy name,  
While, aping God, upon his heart  
Pride sits, a demon robed in flame.

Proud vices, die! Where sin has place  
Be sin's avenger, self -disgust:  
Proud virtues, doubly die, that grace  
At last may burgeon from your dust!

## THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

From end to end, O God, Thy Will  
With swift yet ordered might doth reach:  
Thy purposes their scope fulfil  
In sequence, resting each on each.

In Thee is nothing sudden; nought  
From harmony and law that swerves:  
The orbits of Thine act and thought  
In soft gradation wind their curves.

O then with what a gradual care  
Must Thou have shaped that ark and shrine  
Ordained th'Eternal Word to bear,  
That garden of Thy mystic vine!

How white a gift within her breast  
Lay stored for Him a couch to strew!  
How vast a virtue lined His nest!  
How many a grace beside Him grew!

Of love on love what sweet excess!  
How deep a faith! A hope how high!  
Mary! On earth of thee we guess,  
But we shall see thee when we die.

## THE ANNUNCIATION

That angel's voice is in her ear!  
 Ah, not alone by Mary heard:  
 Like light it cleaves that region drear  
 Where never sang the matin bird!

It thrills th'expectant Hades! They,  
 The pair that once through Eden ranged,  
 Amid their penal shadows grey  
 Stand up and smile, this hour avenged!

They see their queenly daughter grasp  
 The Fruit of Life, her bridal dower;  
 They see its boughs rush up and clasp  
 The sleeping earth with starry bower.

Once more they tread that Eden bound.  
 Far up all round at last, at last,  
 They see God's mountain city-crowned;  
 In every fount they see it glassed.

Why saw they not, the hour they fell,  
 Those hills, that City like a Bride?  
 Then too it girt that garden dell –  
 Predestined Heaven – though undescried.

**THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD**

The crown of Creatures, first in place,  
Was, of all creatures, creature most:  
By nature nothing – all by grace:  
Redemption's first and loftiest boast.

Handmaid of God in heart and will,  
Without His life she seemed a death:  
A void that He alone could fill –  
A word suspended on His breath.

Yet void and nothing she in Him  
The Creature's sole perfection found:  
She was the great Rock's shadow dim;  
She was the silence, not the sound.

On golden airs, by Him upheld,  
She knelt, a soft Subjection mute,  
A hushed Dependence, tranced and spelled,  
Still yearning t'wards the Absolute.

She was a sea-shell from the Deep  
Of God, her function this alone:  
Of Him to whisper as in sleep,  
In everlasting undertone.

This hour on Him her eyes are set,  
And those who tread the earth she trod  
Like her themselves in her forget,  
And her remember but in God.

## THE VIRGINAL CONCEPTION

She hid her face from Joseph's blame,  
 The Spirit's glory-shrouded bride.  
 The sword comes next, but first the shame:  
 Meekly she bore it, nought replied.

In mutual sympathies we live;  
 The insulted heart forgives, but dies;  
 To her that wound was sanative,  
 For life to her was sacrifice.

At us no barbless shaft is thrown  
 When charged with deeds by us unwrought;  
 For sins unchallenged, sins unknown,  
 Worse sins have stained us: act or thought.

Her humbleness no sin could find  
 To weep for, yet, that hour no less  
 Deeplier the habitual sense was shrined  
 In her of her own nothingness.

That hour foundations deeper yet  
 God sank in her, that so more high  
 Her greatness, spire and parapet,  
 Might rise, and nearer to the sky,

That, wholly over-built by grace,  
 Nature might vanish, like some isle  
 In great towers lost, the buried base  
 Of some surpassing fortress-pile.



## JOSEPH'S DOUBT

'Twas not her tear his doubt subdued;  
 No word of hers announced her Christ:  
 By him in dream that angel stood  
 With warning hand. A dream sufficed.

Where faith is strong, though light be dim,  
 How faint a beam reveals how much!  
 The Hand that made the worlds on him  
 Descended with a feather's touch.

Blessèd for ever who believed:  
 Like Her, through faith his crown he won.  
 His heart the Babe Divine conceived;  
 His heart was sire of Mary's Son.

Hail, image of the Father's might!  
 The Heavenly Father's human shade!  
 Hail, silent king whose yoke was light!  
 Hail, foster-sire whom Christ obeyed!

Hail, warder of God's Church beneath,  
 Thy vigil keeping at her door  
 Year after year at Nazareth!  
 So guard, so guide it evermore!

## THE VISITATION

The hilly region crossed with haste,  
 Its last dark ridge discerned no more,  
 Bright as the bow that spans a waste  
 She stood beside her Cousin's door

And spake. That greeting came from God!  
 Filled with the Spirit from on high,  
 Sublime the aged mother stood,  
 And cried aloud in prophecy:

"Soon as thy voice had touched mine ears  
 The child in childless age conceived  
 Leaped up for joy! Throughout all years  
 Blessèd the Woman who believed!"

Type of electing Love, 'tis thine  
 To sound God's greeting from the skies!  
 Thou speak'st, and Faith, a babe divine,  
 Leaps up thy Babe to recognise.

Within true hearts the second birth  
 Exults, though blind as yet, and dumb.  
 The child of grace his hands puts forth,  
 And prophesies of things to come.

## THE STRONG ONE

Supreme among the things create  
 God's image with the downward brow!  
 Greatness that know'st not thou art great!  
 Thus great, Humility art thou!

All strength beside is weakness. Might  
 Belongs to God, and they alone  
 Self-emptied souls and seeming-slight  
 Are filled with God, and share His throne.

O Mary! strong wert thou and meek:  
 Thy meekness gave thee strength divine.  
 Thyself in nothing didst thou seek,  
 Therefore thy Maker made Him thine.

Through pride our parents disobeyed;  
 Rebellious sense avenged the wrong:  
 The soul, the body's captive made,  
 No more was fruitful, nor was strong.

With barrenness the earth was cursed;  
 Inviolable she brought forth no more  
 Her fruits, nor freely as at first.  
 Thou cam'st her Eden to restore!

Low breathes the wind upon the string;  
 The harp, responsive, sounds in turn.  
 Thus o'er thy soul the Spirit's wing  
 Creative passed; and Christ was born.

## DEIPARA

I see Him: on thy lap He lies  
 Mid that Judean stable's gloom.  
 O sweet, O awful Sacrifice!  
 He smiles in sleep, yet knows the doom.

Thou gav'st Him life! But was not this  
 That Life which knows no parting breath?  
 Unmeasured Life? unwaning Bliss?  
 Dread Priestess – lo! – thou gav'st Him death!

Beneath the Tree thy mother stood;  
 Beneath the Cross thou too shalt stand:  
 O Tree of Life! O bleeding Rood!  
 Thy shadow stretches far its hand.

That God Who made the sun and moon  
 In swaddling bands lies dumb and bound –  
 Love's captive! Darker prison soon  
 Awaits Thee in the garden ground.

He wakens. Paradise looks forth  
 Beyond the portals of the grave.  
 Life, life thou gavest! life to Earth,  
 Not Him! Thine Infant dies to save.

## THE EPIPHANY

They leave the land of gems and gold,  
The shining portals of the East;  
For Him, "the Woman's Seed" foretold,  
They leave the revel and the feast.

To earth their sceptres they have cast  
And crowns by kings ancestral worn;  
They track the lonely Syrian waste;  
They kneel before the Babe new-born.

O happy eyes that saw Him first!  
O happy lips that kissed His feet!  
Earth slakes at last her ancient thirst:  
With Eden's joy her pulses beat.

True kings are those who thus forsake  
Their kingdoms for th'Eternal King.  
Serpent, her foot is on thy neck!  
Herod, thou writh'st, but canst not sting!

He, He is King, and He alone,  
Who lifts that Infant hand to bless;  
Who makes His mother's knee His throne,  
Yet rules the starry wilderness.

## THE MOTHER OF GOD

How many a lonely hermit-maid  
Hath brightened like a dawn-touched isle  
When, on her breast in vision laid,  
That Babe hath lit her with His smile!

How many an aged Saint hath felt,  
So graced, a second spring renew  
Her wintry breast; with Anna knelt  
And trembled like the matin dew!

How oft th'unbending monk, no thrall  
In youth of mortal smiles or tears,  
Hath felt that Infant's touch through all  
The armour of his hundred years!

But Mary's was no transient bliss,  
Nor hers a vision's phantom gleam:  
The hourly need, the voice, the kiss:  
That Child was hers! – 'Twas not a dream! –

At morning hers, and when the sheen  
Of moonrise crept the cliffs along;  
In silence hers, and hers between  
The pulses of the night-bird's song.

And as the Child, the love. Its growth  
Was hour by hour a growth in grace:  
That Child was God, and love for both  
Advanced perforce with equal pace.

## A MOTHER'S CARE

He looked on her humility.  
 Ah! humbler thrice that breast was made  
 When Jesus watched His mother's eye,  
 When God each God-born wish obeyed!

In her with seraph seraph strove,  
 And each the other's purpose crossed:  
 And now 'twas Rev'ence, now 'twas Love  
 The peaceful strife that won or lost.

Now to that Infant she extends  
 Those hands that mutely say "mine own!"  
 Now shrinks abashed, or swerves and bends  
 As bends a willow backward blown.

And oft-times, like a roseleaf caught  
 By eddying airs from fairy land,  
 The kiss a sleeping brow that sought  
 Descends upon th'unsceptred hand!

O tenderest awe, whose sweet excess  
 Had ended in a fond despair  
 Had not the all-pitying helplessness  
 Constrained the boldness of her care!

Holiest strife! The angelic hosts  
 That watched it hid their dazzled eyes,  
 And lingered from the heavenly coasts  
 To bless that heav'nlier Paradise!

## THE PRESENTATION

Twelve years had passed, and, still a child  
 In brightness of th'unblemished face,  
 Once more she scaled those steps, and smiled  
 On Him who slept in her embrace.

As in she passed there fell a calm  
 On all: each bosom slowly rose  
 Like the long branches of the palm  
 When under them the south wind blows:

The scribe forgot his wordy lore;  
 The chanted psalm was heard far off;  
 Hushed was the clash of golden ore;  
 And hushed the Sadducean scoff.

Type of the Church, the gift was thine!  
 'Twas thine to offer first, that hour,  
 Thy Son the Sacrifice Divine,  
 The Church's everlasting dower!

Great priestess! Round that aureoled brow  
 Which cloud or shadow ne'er had crossed,  
 Began there not thenceforth to grow  
 A milder dawn of Pentecost?



**THE SWORD***Luke 2:35*

To be the mother of her Lord  
What means it? This: a bleeding heart!  
The pang that woke at Simeon's word  
Worked inward, never to depart.

The dreadful might of sin she knew  
As innocence alone can know:  
O'er her its deadliest gloom it threw  
As shades lie darkest on the snow.

Yet o'er her sorrow's depth no storm  
Of earth's rebellious passion rolled:  
So sleeps some lake no gusts deform  
High on the dark hills' craggy fold.

In that still glass th'unmeasured cliff  
With all its scars and clouds is shown,  
And, mellowed in that mother's grief,  
At times, O Christ, we catch Thine own!

**STORED IN HER HEART***Luke 2:51*

As every change of April sky  
Is imaged in th'unchangeful brook  
Her meditative memory  
Mirrored His ev'ry deed and look.

As suns through summer ether rolled  
Mature each growth the spring has wrought,  
Her love's calm solstice turned to gold  
Her harvests of quiescent thought.

Her soul was as a vase, and shone  
Illumined with th'interior ray;  
Her Maker's finger wrote thereon  
A mystic Bible new each day.

Deep heart! In all His sevenfold might  
The Paraclete with thee abode,  
And, sacramented there in light,  
Bare witness of the things of God.

## THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

### I

The fruitful river slides along;  
 The conqueror's city glitters nigh;  
 The palm-groves ring with dance and song;  
 Earth trembles, crimsoned from the sky.

Far down the sunset, lonely stands  
 Some temple of a bygone age  
 Slow-settling into sea-like sands,  
 Long served with prayer and pilgrimage.

Here ruled the shepherd-kings, and they,  
 That race from sun and moon which drew  
 The unending lines of priestly sway.  
 Here Alexander's standard flew.

Here last the great Caesarian star  
 Through Egypt's sunset flashed its beam,  
 While pealed the Roman trump afar,  
 And Earth's first empire like a dream

Dissolved. But who are they the three  
 That pierce thus late yon desert wide?  
 The Babe is on His mother's knee;  
 Low-bent an old man walks beside.

What say'st thou, Egypt? – "Let them come!  
 Of such as little note I keep  
 As of the least of flies that hum  
 Above my deserts or my deep!"

## THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

### II

The sunless day is sweeter yet  
 Than when the golden sun-showers danced  
 On bower new-glazed, or rivulet,  
 And Spring her banners first advanced.

By wind unshaken hang in dream  
 The wind-flowers o'er their dark green lair,  
 And those ensanguined cups that seem  
 Not bodied forms but wov'n of air.

Nor bird is heard, nor insect flits;  
 A tear-drop glitt'ring on her cheek,  
 Composed but shadowed, Nature sits –  
 Yon primrose not more staid and meek.

The light of pensive hope unquenched  
 On those pathetic brows and eyes,  
 She sits by silver dew-showers drenched,  
 Through which the chill spring odours rise.

Was e'er on human count'nance shed  
 So sweet a sadness? Once, no more:  
 Then when his charge the patriarch led  
 Dream-warned to Egypt's distant shore.

Down on her Infant Mary gazed;  
 Her face the angels marked with awe;  
 Yet 'neath its dimness, undisplaced,  
 Looked forth that smile the Magians saw.

## THE FALL OF THE IDOLS

The fancy of an age gone by  
 When Fancy's self to earth declined  
 Still thirsting for divinity  
 Yet still, through sense, to Godhead blind,

Poor mimic of that Truth of old –  
 The Patriarchs' faith a Faith revealed –  
 Compressed its God in mortal mould  
 Poor prisoner of Creation's field.

Nature and Nature's Lord were one!  
 Then countless gods from cloud and stream  
 Glanced forth; from sea, and moon, and sun:  
 So ran the Pantheistic dream.

And thus the All-Holy, thus the All-True,  
 The One Supreme, the Good, the Just,  
 Like mist was scattered, lost like dew,  
 And vanished in the wayside dust.

Mary! through thee the idols fell:  
 When He the nations longed for came,  
 True God yet Man, with man to dwell,  
 The phantoms hid their heads for shame.

His place or thine removed, ere long  
 The Bards would push the sects aside,  
 And, lifted by the might of song,  
 Olympus stand re-edified!

**JOSEPH**

Gladsome and pure was Eden's bower;  
Saint Joseph's house was holier far,  
More rich in Love's august dower,  
More amply lit by Wisdom's star.

The Queen of Virgins where he sate  
Beside him stood and watched his hand:  
His daughter-wife, his angel-mate  
Submissive to his least command.

Hail, patriarch blest and sage, on earth  
Thine was the bridal of the skies!  
Thy house was heaven, for by its hearth  
Thy God reposed in mortal guise.

Hail! Life most sweet in life's decline!  
Hail death, than life more bright, more blest! –  
The hands of Mary clasping thine,  
Thy head upon the Saviour's breast!

**A MOTHER'S LOVE**

Her Child, her God, in Nature's right  
She loved. We love Him but by grace.  
Behold! our virtue's proudest height  
Is lower than her virtue's base!

Alone by holy Nature taught  
All lesser mothers love their own:  
Her love was Nature's love, heaven-caught,  
And lightning-lifted to The Throne.

Her God! Alone through worship she  
Proportioned love for Him could prove!  
Her God! – and yet her Offspring! He  
Both loved her, and was bound to love!

## THE MOTHER OF CHRIST

### I

He willed to lack; He willed to bear;  
He willed by suffering to be schooled;  
He willed the chains of flesh to wear;  
Yet from her arms the worlds He ruled.

As tapers 'mid the noontide glow  
With merged, yet separate radiance burn,  
With human taste and touch, e'en so,  
The things He knew He willed to learn.

He sat beside the lowly door:  
His homeless eyes appeared to trace  
In evening skies remembered lore,  
And shadows of His Father's face.

One only knew Him. She alone,  
Who nightly to His cradle crept  
And, lying like the moonbeam prone,  
Worshipped her Maker as He slept.



**THE MOTHER OF CHRIST****II**

Daily beneath His mother's eyes  
Her Lamb matured His lowliness;  
'Twas hers the lovely Sacrifice  
With fillet and with flower to dress.

Beside that mother's knee He knelt;  
With heavenly-human lips He prayed;  
His Will within her will she felt;  
And yet His Will her will obeyed.

Gethsemane! When day is done  
Thy flowers with falling dew are wet;  
Her tears fell never, for the sun  
Those tears that brightened never set.

The house was silent as that shrine  
The priest but entered once a year:  
There shone His emblem. Light Divine!  
Thy presence and Thy power were here!

## THE MOTHER OF THE CREATOR

Bud forth a Saviour, Earth! fulfil  
 Thy first of functions, ever new!  
 Balm-dropping heaven, for aye distil  
 Thy grace like manna or like dew!

"To us, this day, a Child is born."  
 Heaven knows not mere historic facts –  
 Celestial mysteries night and morn  
 Live on in ever-present acts.

Calv'ry's dread Victim in the skies  
 On God's great altar rests e'en now:  
 The Pentecostal glory lies  
 For ever round the Church's brow.

From Son and Father, He, the Lord  
 Of Love and Life, proceeds alway:  
 Upon the first creative Word  
 Creation, trembling, hangs for aye.

Nor less ineffably renewed  
 Than when on earth the tie began,  
 Is that mysterious motherhood  
 Which re-creates the worlds and man.

## THE MOTHER OF THE SAVIOUR

Heart with His in just accord!  
 O soul His echo, tone for tone!  
 Spirit that heard and kept His word!  
 O Countenance moulded like His Own!

Behold, she seemed on Earth to dwell,  
 But hid in light she ever sat  
 Beneath the throne ineffable,  
 Chanting her clear Magnificat.

Fed from the boundless heart of God  
 The joy within her rose more high,  
 And all her being overflowed,  
 Until that hour decreed drew nigh.

That hour, there crept her spirit o'er  
 The shadow of that pain world-wide  
 Whereof her Son the substance bore.  
 Him offering, half in Him she died,

Standing, like that strange moon whereon  
 The mask of Earth lies dim and dead:  
 An orb of glory, shadow-strewn,  
 Yet girdled with a luminous thread.

## THE WONDERFUL MOTHER

Mother-maid! To none save thee  
 Belongs in full a parent's name,  
 So fruitful thy virginity,  
 Thy motherhood so pure from blame!

All other parents, what are they?  
 Thy types! In them thou stood'st rehearsed  
 As they in bird, and bud, and spray.  
 Thine antitype? – The Eternal First!

Prime Parent He: and next Him thou!  
 O'ershadowed by the Father's Might  
 Thy "Fiat" was thy bridal vow:  
 Thine offspring He, the "Light from Light."

Her Son Thou wert, her Son Thou art,  
 O Christ, Her substance fed Thy growth:  
 Alone, she shaped Thee in her heart,  
 Thy mother and Thy father both.

**THE LOVABLE MOTHER**

Mother of Love! Thy love to Him  
Cherub and Seraph can but guess:  
A mother sees its image dim  
In her own breathless tenderness.

That infant touch none else could feel  
Vibrates like light through all her sense.  
Far off she hears his cry; her zeal  
With lions fights in his defence.

Unmarked his youth goes by. His hair  
Still smoothes she down, still strokes apart;  
The first white thread that meets her there  
Glides like a dagger through her heart.

Men praise him: on her matron cheek  
There dawns once more a maiden red.  
Of war, of battle-fields they speak:  
She sees once more his father dead.

In sickness, half in sleep, she hears  
His foot, ere yet that foot is nigh;  
Wakes with a smile, and scarcely fears  
If He but clasp her hand, to die.

## IN HIS FATHER'S HOUSE

Three days she seeks her Child in vain:  
 He who vouchsafed that holy woe,  
 And makes the gates of glory pain,  
 He, He alone its depth can know.

She wears the garment He must wear;  
 She tastes His chalice! From a cross  
 Unseen she cries, "Where art Thou, where?  
 Why hast Thou me forsaken thus?"

With feebler hand she touches first  
 That sharpest thorn in all His crown,  
 Worse than the nails, the reed, the thirst  
 Seeming-desertion's icy frown!

Saviour! We, the weak, the blind,  
 We lose Thee, snared in pleasure's bound.  
 Teach us once more Thy Face to find  
 Where only Thou art truly found:

In Thy true Church, its faith, its love,  
 Its anthemed rites or penance mute,  
 And that interior life whereof  
 Eternal life is flower and fruit.

## AT NAZARETH

Before the Saviour's eyes unsealed  
 The Beatific Vision stood;  
 If God from her that splendour veiled  
 Awhile, in Him she gazed on God.

Th'Eternal Spirit o'er them hung:  
 Th'Eternal Father moved beside:  
 With hands forth-held the angelic throng  
 Worshipped their Maker far descried.

Yet neither He who said of yore  
 "Let there be light" and all was day,  
 Nor she that, still a creature, wore,  
 Creation's crown – and wears for aye –

To casual gazers wondrous seemed:  
 The wanderer sat beside their door,  
 Partook their broken bread, and deemed  
 The donors kindly, nothing more.

In Eden thus that primal pair  
 Ere sin had marred their first estate  
 Sate side by side in silent prayer,  
 Their earliest sunset fronting, sate;

And now the lion, now the pard  
 Piercing the Cassia bower drew nigh;  
 Fixed on the twain a mute regard,  
 Half pleased, half vacant; then passed by.

## ON THE SYRIAN SHORE

If sense of Man's unworthiness  
 And Nature's blame, should look for strife,  
 Should wake with wakening May, and press  
 New-born contentment out of life;

If thoughts of breed unblest and blind  
 Should stamp upon the springing flower,  
 Or blacker mem'ries haunt the mind  
 As ravens haunt the ruined tower;

Oh! – then how sweet in heart to breathe  
 Those pure Judean gales once more;  
 From Bethlehem's crib to Nazareth  
 In heart to tread that Syrian shore;

To watch that star-like Infant bring  
 To one of soul as clear and white  
 May-lilies, fresh from Siloa's spring  
 Or Passion-flower with May-dews bright;

To follow, earlier yet, the feet  
 Of her the hilly land who trod  
 With true love's haste, intent to greet  
 That aged saint beloved of God.

Before her like a stream let loose  
 The long vale's flowerage, winding, ran:  
 Nature resumed her Eden use,  
 And Earth was reconciled with Man!



## THE WEDDING AT CANA

"They have no wine." The tender guest  
Was grieved their feast should lack for aught.  
He seemed to slight her mute request,  
Not less the grace she wished He wrought.

O great in Love! And full of grace  
That winds in thee a river broad  
From Christ, with heaven-reflecting face,  
Gladdening the city of thy God!

Be this thy gift: that man henceforth  
No more should creep through life content,  
Draining the springs impure of earth  
With life's material element.

Let sacraments to sense succeed:  
Let nought be winning, nought be good  
Which fails of Him to speak and bleed  
Once more with His all-cleansing blood!

"They have no wine." At heaven's high feast  
That soft petition still hath place,  
And bathes, so wills that Kingly Priest  
"Whose hour is come," the worlds with grace.

## THE CAVIL

“So great! Then wherefore whilst on earth  
 So still, so silent, so unknown?  
 What prophet sang her death or birth?  
 Before her steps what trump was blown?”

Ah, barren brain heav’n-taught in vain!  
 So blind! In texts so parrot-learned!  
 Against the grain plain shows not plain:  
 Truth grasped by sense is undiscerned.

Her Son was God, yet *seemèd* Man:  
 She, chief of creatures, seemed the least.  
 Thus likest Him who first began,  
 So long concealed, at Cana’s feast

His Godlike works, yet oft forbade  
 To noise those Godlike works abroad.  
 Inferior greatness is displayed;  
 The loftier hides in light with God.

## THE BEGINNING OF MIRACLES

The water changed to wine she saw:  
 She saw nought else of shapes around,  
 With such a trance of loving awe  
 That first of signs her spirit bound.

She saw in perspective benign  
 Whate'er that first of signs rehearsed,  
 That later chalice, and the wine  
 More changed, that slaked a holier thirst.

She saw calm homes of love and rest:  
 The earthly life to heaven allied –  
 The deaths sabbatical and blest  
 Of Saints that died as Joseph died.

She saw a world serene, august,  
 A world new-made, whose every part  
 Was fashioned, not of sinful dust,  
 But in, and from the Saviour's Heart.

She saw the stream of human kind  
 So long defiled with weeds and mud  
 In fontal pureness onward wind  
 To meet th' eternal ocean flood

Within whose breast a love-star shook  
 More fair than he that from the skies,  
 As home their silent way they took,  
 Illumed her never tearless eyes.

## THE BLESSED

When from the crowd that voice was raised  
That blessed the mother of the Lord,  
Not her the Son who loved her praised,  
But all who heard and kept His word.

Answer meet! to her how dear  
To her too great her crown to boast!  
The meek were glad that praise to hear:  
The meekest – loftiest – joyed the most.

Above her soul's pure mirror crept  
No mist; no doubt within her stirred;  
She asked not "Who His words hath kept  
Like her, the mother of the Word?"

Her tender heart rejoiced to think  
That all who say, "Thy Will be mine"  
Without, or with the external link,  
In heart bring forth the Babe divine.

Chief of the prophets John might be,  
Yet, but for that his happier place  
In Jesus' kingdom, less than he  
The least one in the realm of grace.

The mother of Incarnate God  
Some prophet's mother seemed, alone.  
His hour not yet was come: abroad  
To noise her fame had noised his own.

**THE GODHEAD VEILED**

He was no conqueror borne abroad  
On all the fiery winds of fame  
That over-sweeps a world o'er-awed  
In ruin-heaps to write a Name.

No act triumphant crushed the foe;  
No word of power redeemed the thrall;  
By suff'ring He prevailed that so  
His Father might be all in all.

His Godhead veiled from mortal eyes  
Showed forth that Father's Godhead still  
As calm seas mirror starry skies  
Because themselves invisible.

Thus Mary in the Son was hid:  
That Son alone that mother's boast;  
She nothing said, she nothing did:  
Her light in His was merged and lost.

## THE MEETING ON CALVARY

She stands before Him on the road;  
He bears the cross; He climbs the steep;  
Three times He sinks beneath His load;  
He sinks to earth; she does not weep.

She may not touch that cross whose weight  
Against His will a stranger bears:  
In heart to bear it, and to wait  
His upward footsteps, this is hers.

She may not prop that thorn-crowned head;  
The waves of men between them break;  
Another's hand the veil must spread  
Against that forehead, and that cheek.

Her eyes on His are fastened. Lo!  
There stand they, met on Calv'ry's height,  
Twin mirrors of a single woe  
Made by reflection infinite.

The sons of Sion round them rave;  
The Roman trumpet storms the wind;  
They goad him on with spear and stave;  
He passes by, she drops behind.

## BESIDE THE CROSS

She stood in silence. Slowly passed  
 The hours whose moments dropped in blood.  
 Its frown the Darkness further cast.  
 She moved not. Silently she stood.

No human sympathy she sought:  
 Her help was God, and God alone –  
 Not even th'instinctive respite caught  
 Prom passionate gesture, sigh or moan.

Her silence listened. On the air  
 Like death-bells tolled that prime decree  
 Which bade the Eternal Victim bear  
 Man's sin primeval. Let it be!

The women round her heard all day  
 The clash of arms, the scoffing tongue;  
 She heard the breaking of that spray  
 Whereon the fruit of knowledge hung.

Behold the Babe of Bethlehem! Ay!  
 The Infant slumbered on thy breast;  
 And thou that heard'st His earliest cry  
 Must hear His "Consummatum est."

**STABAT MATER**

She stood. she sank not. Slowly fell  
Adown the cross th'atoning blood.  
In agony ineffable  
She offered still His own to God.

No pang of His her bosom spared;  
She felt in Him its several power;  
But she in heart His priesthood shared:  
She offered sacrifice that hour.

"Behold thy Son! " Ah, last bequest!  
It breathed His last farewell! The sword  
Predicted pierced that hour her breast.  
She stood. She answered not a word.

His own in John He gave. She wore  
Thenceforth the mother-crown of Earth.  
O Eve! thy sentence too she bore:  
That hour in sorrow she brought forth.



## THE TWO LAST GIFTS

“Behold thy mother!” From the cross  
He gave her not to one alone:  
We are His brethren; unto us  
He gave a mother as to John.

Behold the greatest gift of Christ –  
Save that wherein Himself He gives:  
The wonder-working Eucharist,  
Sole life of each that truly lives;

Mysterious Bread not joined and knit  
With him that eats, like mortal food,  
But, fire-like, joining him with It  
And blending with the Church of God!

Mary! from thee the Saviour took  
That flesh He gives! The mercies twain  
Like streams of a divided brook  
But separate to meet again.

## THE QUEEN OF MARTYRS

That tie, the closest ever twined,  
That linked a creature with her God  
All ties of man in one combined  
When by His cross that creature stood.

In both, one Will all wishes quelled;  
On one great Sire were fixed their eyes;  
From sister-hearts the death-stream welled,  
Twins of a single sacrifice.

In death her Spouse, her Son in life,  
Her wedding-garment was His blood:  
It clasped her close enough a wife  
To wear the crown of widowhood.

O Love! alone thy topmost height  
They tread who stand thy clouds above,  
Where all the rock-hewn paths unite  
That branch from God, and lead to love!

## PIÈTA

The Saviour from the cross they took;  
 Across His mother's knee He lies;  
 She wept not, but a little shook  
 As with dead hand she closed dead eyes.

The surface wave of grief we know:  
 By us its depths are unexplored;  
 She treads the still abyss below  
 Foll'wing the footsteps of her Lord.

Above her head the great floods roll:  
 Before her still He moves, her hope;  
 And calm in heart of storm her soul,  
 Calm as the whirlpool's central drop.

The Saviour from the cross they took:  
 Across His mother's knee He lay:  
 O passers by, be still and look!  
 That twain compose one cross for aye.

**BEFORE THE TOMB**

Before the Tomb the Mother sate  
Amid the new-delved garden ground:  
Her eyes upon its stony gate  
Were fixed, while darkness closed around.

A wind above the olives crept:  
It seemed the world's collected sigh;  
That Mother's eyes their vigil kept;  
She felt but this: her Lord was nigh.

Behind her, leaning each on each,  
The holy women waited near,  
Nor any spake of comfort: speech  
Was slain by sorrow and by fear.

From realm to realm of night He passed,  
That Soul which smote the dark to-day;  
That mother's eyes were settled fast  
Upon the tomb where Jesus lay.

## MATER DOLOROSA

From her He passed; yet still with her  
 The endless thought of Him found rest,  
 A sad but sacred branch of myrrh  
 Forever folded in her breast.

A Boreal winter void of light:  
 Such seemed her widowed days forlorn.  
 She slept, but in her breast all night  
 Her heart lay waking till the morn.

Sad flowers on Calvary that grew;  
 Sad fruits that ripened from the Cross;  
 These were the only joys she knew,  
 Yet all but these she counted loss.

Love strong as death! She lived through thee  
 That mystic life whose ev'ry breath  
 From Life's low harpstring am'rously  
 Draws out the sweetened name of Death.

Love stronger far than Death or Life!  
 Thy martyrdom was o'er at last.  
 Her eyelids dropped, and without strife,  
 To Him she loved her spirit passed.

## THE VEIL

For thirty years with her He lurked  
 As secret as th'unrisen sun:  
 In three short years His Work He worked:  
 That work we know, the victory won.

Once more the veil descends, and shrouds  
 That trance of love, the forty days:  
 Like mountains lost in luminous clouds  
 Their marvels cheat our yearning gaze.

The saints who rose when Jesus died,  
 Laz'rus twice cast from nature's womb,  
 Hidden their after-days abide  
 As Enoch's life or Moses' tomb.

The word, the work, no more, is told:  
 The lore man needs not shuns his sight:  
 Thy work was this, to clothe in mould  
 Of Adam's race the Infinite.

Thy motherhood thine endless act  
 In this all lesser praise is drowned.  
 To this to add were to detract:  
 Sole-throned it bideth, and self-crowned.

## THE ASCENSION

Rejoice thou Earth, thy crown is won!  
 Rejoice, rejoice, ye heavenly host!  
 And thou, the mother of the Son,  
 Rejoice the first, rejoice the most!

Who captive led captivity,  
 From Hades' void circumference  
 Who raised the patriarch band on high,  
 There rules, and sends us graces thence.

Rejoice, glad Earth, o'er winter's grave  
 With altars wreathed and clarions blown;  
 And thou, the race redeemed, out-brave  
 The rites of Nature with thine own!

Rejoice, O Mary! – thou that long  
 Didst lean thy breast upon the sword  
 Sad nightingale, the Spirit's song  
 That sang'st all night! He reigns restored!

Rejoice! He goes the Paraclete  
 To send! Rejoice! He reigns on high!  
 That sword lies broken at thy feet!  
 His triumph is thy victory.

## PENTECOST

Clear as those silver trumps of old  
 That woke Judea's jubilee,  
 Strong as the breeze of morning, rolled  
 O'er answering woodlands from the sea,

That evangelic anthem vast  
 Which winds, like sunrise, round the globe,  
 Following that sunrise, far and fast  
 And trampling on his fiery robe,

Once more the Pentecostal torch  
 Lights on the courses of the year:  
 The upper chamber of the Church  
 Is thrilled once more with joy and fear.

Who rears her brow from out the dust?  
 Who fixes on a world restored  
 A gaze like Eve's, but more august?  
 Who lifts it heaven-ward on her Lord?

It is the birthday of the Bride!  
 The new begins; the ancient ends:  
 From all the gates of Heaven flung wide  
 The promised Paraclete descends.

He Who o'ershadowed Mary once  
 O'ershades humanity to-day;  
 And bids her fruitful prove in sons  
 Co-heritors with Christ for aye.



**THE HUMBLE EXALTED**

The chief of creatures lived unknown,  
Sharing her Maker's sacred cloud,  
Like some fair headland flower-bestrewn  
That sleeps within its sea-born shroud.

The brethren sought precedence; Christ  
To them gave titles. He, their God:  
For Him "the Son of Man" sufficed.  
The hidden way with Him she trod.

She died: the idols sank, and they  
Those four great heresies, whose pride  
Successive blurred the fount of day  
Her Son's divinity denied.

As God, as Man, secure He reigned.  
Then came her hour, then shone her crown  
And theirs - that saintly court, unstained  
While guests of earth by earth's renown.

Humility was crowned though late;  
That boastful, pagan greatness fell;  
And on their thrones the meek ones sate  
Judging the tribes of Israel.

## MARIA ASSUMPTA

### I

The mother – of the heavenly Child  
 Who made the worlds, and who redeemed  
 The maid and mother undefiled –  
 She died, or else to die she seemed.

Once more above the late-entombed  
 They bent. What found they? Vacant space.  
 To heaven had Mary been assumed,  
 And only flowers were in the place.

O happy earth! Elected sphere!  
 Hope of that starry host above!  
 Thou too thy Maker's voice shalt hear;  
 Thou too thy great assumption prove!

The earth shall be renewed: the skies  
 Shall bloom with glories unrevealed:  
 Each season new but typifies  
 The wonders then to be unsealed.

Revives, each spring, a world that died:  
 A world by summer's store increased  
 Shall hear ere long that mandate wide  
 "Prepare the glad Assumption Feast!"

## MARIA ASSUMPTA

### II

A soul-like sound, subdued yet strong,  
 A whispered music, mystery-rife,  
 A sound like Eden airs among  
 The branches of the Tree of Life –

At first no more than this; at last  
 The voice of every land and clime  
 It swept o'er Earth a clarion blast:  
 Earth heard, and shook with joy sublime.

Mary! thy triumph was Earth's own!  
 In thee she saw her prime restored:  
 She saw ascend a spotless throne  
 For Him, her Saviour and her Lord.

First trophy of all-conqu'ring grace,  
 First victory of that Blood all pure  
 Of man's once fair, but fallen race,  
 Thou stood'st, the monument secure.

The Church had spoken. She that dwells  
 Sun-clad with beatific light,  
 From Truth's uncounted citadels,  
 From Sion's Apostolic height,

Had stretched her sceptred hands, and pressed  
 The seal of Faith, defined and known,  
 Upon that Truth till then confessed  
 By Love's instinctive sense alone.



## **PART 2: MARY IN HEAVEN**



## THE HOLY MOTHER

To lowliest creatures God permits  
 Maternal live, an instinct blind  
 Weakness with help that softly knits:  
 Benignant Nature's law of kind.

The human mother's happier nest,  
 The bird's with wing and quiescent bill,  
 Are both but Nature's, and the best  
 That earth can yield is earthly still.

But Mary – heavenly is her Child,  
 And heavenly her maternal love;  
 To her it comes, the undefiled,  
 Comes like her Infant from above.

From the o'ershadowing Spirit, Him  
 Alone descends that Love she proves;  
 No mortal joy her eye makes dim:  
 It is the God-Man that she loves.

It is the God-Man that she loves;  
 He mother hood's sublimest part  
 Is this: with Him the world that moves  
 To share that prime parental heart.

**SANCTA MARIA**

Mary! To thee the humble cry.  
What seek they? – gifts to Pride unknown.  
They seek thy help to pass thee by:  
They murmur, “Show us but thy Son.”

The childlike heart shall enter in;  
The virgin soul its God shall see;  
Mother, and maiden pure from sin,  
Be thou the guide: the Way is He.

The mystery high of God made Man  
Through thee to man is easier made:  
Pronounce the consonant who can  
Without the softer vowel's aid!



**SHOW US THY SON**

Who doubts that thou art finite? Who  
Is ignorant that from Godhead's height  
To what is loftiest here below  
The interval is infinite?

O Mary! with that smile thrice-blest  
Upon their petulance look down,  
Their dull negation, blind protest:  
Thy smile will melt away their frown.

Show them thy Son! That hour their heart  
Will beat and burn with love like thine,  
Grow large, and learn from thee that art  
Which communes best with things divine.

The man who grasps not what is best  
In creaturely existence, he  
Is narrowest in the brain, and least  
Can grasp the thought of Deity.

## THE TOWER OF IVORY

This scheme of worlds which vast we call  
Is only vast compared with man:  
Compared with God, the One yet All,  
Its greatness dwindles to a span –

A Lily with its isles of buds  
Asleep on some unmeasured sea;  
God, the starry multitudes?  
What are they more than this to Thee?

Yet, girt by Nature's petty pale  
Each tenant holds the place assigned  
To each in Being's awful scale:  
The last of creatures leaves behind

Th'abyss of nothingness: the first  
Into th'abyss of Godhead peers  
Waiting that vision which shall burst  
In glory on th'eternal years.

Tower of our hope! – through thee we climb  
Finite creation's topmost stair;  
Through thee from Sion's height sublime  
T'wards God we gaze through clearer air.

Infinite distance still divides  
Created from Creative Power;  
But all which intercepts and hides  
Lies dwarfed by that surpassing tower!

## THE MIRROR OF JUSTICE

Not in Himself the Eternal Word  
 Lay hid upon Creation's day:  
 His loveliness abroad He poured  
 On all the worlds, and pours for aye.

Not in Himself th'Incarnate Son  
 In whom Man's race is born again  
 His glory hides: the victory won,  
 He rose to send His gifts on men.

In sacraments, His dread behests,  
 In providence, in granted prayer,  
 Before the time He manifests  
 His presence, far as man may bear.

He shines not from a vault of gloom:  
 The horizon round His splendour paints.  
 The sphere of souls His beams illumine:  
 His light is glorious in His saints.

He shines upon His Church that moon  
 Who, in the watches of the night,  
 Transmits to Earth th'entrusted boon,  
 A sister-orb of sacred light.

And thou, pure mirror of His grace!  
 As sun reflected in a sea,  
 So, Mary, feeblest eyes the face  
 Of Him thou lov'st discern in thee.

## THE HELP OF CHRISTIANS

Not for herself doth Mary hold  
That mother-crown, that queenly throne;  
The loftiest in the Saviour's fold  
The least possesses of her own.

Pure thoughts that make to God their quest  
With her find footing o'er the clouds,  
Like those sea-crossing birds that rest  
A moment on the sighing shrouds.

In her our hearts, no longer nursed  
On dust, for spiritual beauty yearn;  
From her our instincts, as at first,  
An upward gravitation learn.

Through her draw nigh the things remote,  
For in true love's supernal sphere  
No more round self th'affections float:  
More near to God, to Man more near.

In her, the weary warfare past,  
The port attained, the exile o'er,  
We see the Church's barque at last  
Close-anchored on th'eternal shore!

## THE MORNING STAR

Shine out, Star, and sing the praise  
Of that unrisen Sun whose glow  
Thus feeds thee with thine earlier rays:  
The secret of thy song we know.

Thou sing'st that Sun of Righteousness,  
Sole light of this benighted globe,  
Whose beams, from Him reflected, dress  
His mother in her shining robe!

Pale lily, pearled around with dew,  
Lift high that heaven-illuminated vase,  
And sing the glories ever new  
Of her, God's chalice, "full of grace."

Cerulean ocean fringed with white  
That wear'st her colours evermore  
In all thy pureness, all thy might,  
Resound her name from shore to shore:

Her name, and His, that, like thy rim  
Of light the dusky lands around,  
Still girds creation's shadow dim  
With Incarnation's shining bound.

Transfigured Earth, disguised too long,  
It falls that pagan mask of sense!  
Burst forth, dumb worlds, at last in song  
Of spiritual intelligence!

## THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT

Man's soul a palace is: therein  
 A kingly senate sits in state,  
 But under-winding caves of sin  
 A pestilence all round create.

Man's head uptowers in arctic air;  
 O'er temperate zones his heart hath sway;  
 But tropic sands there are, and there  
 The lions of our nature prey.

Dread Maker of our twofold being  
 In night and day alternate robed,  
 Shine on us, that the monsters, fleeing,  
 May leave Thine image throned and globed!

Shine on us – and thou shin'st! Sun- bright  
 Flash back the ransomed fields and meads  
 Trod by that Form compact of light  
 That only mid the lilies feeds.

O Earth, partaker of the curse,  
 Thy glory fled when Adam fell:  
 Yet, not her mother but her nurse,  
 Of Mary earth was capable!

## THE MOTHER OF DIVINE GRACE

The gifts a mother showers each day  
 Upon her softly-clam'rous brood,  
 The gifts they value but for play,  
 The graver gifts of clothes and food,

Whence come they but from him who sows  
 With harder hand and reaps the soil –  
 The merit of his labouring brows,  
 The guerdon of his manly toil?

From Him the Grace: through her it stands  
 Adjusted, meted, and applied;  
 And ever, passing through her hands,  
 Enriched it seems, and beautified.

Love's mirror doubles Love's caress:  
 Love's echo to Love's voice is true:  
 Their Sire the children love not less  
 Because they clasp a mother too.

## THE IMMACULATE HEART

From sin but not alone from sin  
That bright one of the worlds was free;  
Never there stirred her breast within  
That downward creature-sympathy

Which clouds the strong eyes that discern  
Through all things One, th' All-True, All-Just,  
And bids the infirmer instinct yearn  
To beauteous nothings writ in dust.

Clear shines o'er glooming waves afar  
Yon cottage fire, as daylight dies;  
How pure till comes the evening star  
To shame it from untainted skies!

Mary, in thy daughters still  
Thine image pure, if pale, we find:  
The crystal of the flawless will;  
The soul irradiating the mind;

The heart where live, in memory sheathed,  
But ghosts of mortal joy or grief  
Like wood-scents through a Bible breathed  
By some thin-pressed long-cherished leaf;

The tender strength; the bliss heaven-taught,  
Ungessed by Time's distempered thrall;  
The lucid depth of loving thought;  
The peace divine encircling all.



In Him, th'Unseen, their wealth they hoard:  
They sit, in self-oblivion sweet,  
The virgin-spouses of their Lord,  
Beside the Virgin-Mother's feet.

## THE TWO HEARTS

Love, youthful love, that mean'st so well,  
And spread'st thy wings to soar so high,  
Yet, backward blown by gusts from hell  
On desert sands so oft dost die!

For thee what help, from pride, from scorn?  
Ah! love alone is love's defence:  
True love, of love celestial born,  
And nursed in caves of reverence.

Childhood thrice-blest! thine ev'ry thought  
Reveres superior mind or power  
That, sown in darkness, may be wrought  
From rev'rence, love's consummate flower!

A sinless man, a sinless mate  
Walked, linked in God, o'er Eden's sward:  
But He who links holds separate:  
Between them paced Whom both adored!

Face so like thy Son's, look forth  
Through clouds that blot this mortal scene,  
And, teaching woman's spiritual worth,  
The heart of man with fire make clean,

That so once more with spotless feet  
Upon a world-wide Eden's sod  
Humanity may stand complete  
One image, dual-cast from God;

And, dual-crowned like that fair hill  
Parnassian, which from summits twain  
Flashed back the morning bright and still  
Echoing the Muses' vestal strain,

May sing the Heavenly Lover's praise  
With voices twain, yet lost in one,  
And learn that only when we raise  
Our hearts, they beat in unison.

## THE LILY

How narrow earthly loves, e'en those  
 Clouded the least by earthly stain!  
 What bars of Self around them close!  
 Not death itself can burst that chain.

We love amiss; we sorrow worse;  
 Wan vintage of a barren sun  
 We drain around an ill-waked corse  
 In death-vaults of delight foregone.

O thou whose love to Him was knit  
 So near thee, yet so high above;  
 In whom to love was to submit,  
 In whom submission meant but love;

Whose heart great love dilated so  
 That by His cross, a mother twice,  
 All men thy sons became; whose woe  
 But crowned True Love's self-sacrifice.

Make thou the bosom, pure before,  
 Through grief more solid-pure to grow;  
 The lily vase that shook of yore  
 Make thou the lily filled with snow!

The thought of thee among the Blest  
 O'er earth a bliss snow-pure doth breathe:  
 Thy rest in heaven diffuses rest  
 O'er those who love and mourn beneath.

## FULL OF GRACE

If he of angels first and best  
 Chief ardour of the seraph fires  
 More graces clasps than all the rest,  
 Perchance than all their ninefold choirs,

(That so proportioned worth and place  
 May wed, nor even war with odd)  
 What plenitude of conquering grace  
 Must fill the mother of her God!

Their greatness stands in limits curbed  
 Of sequent rank and grade; but she  
 Is one and whole, a world full-orbed,  
 An order sole, and hierarchy,

Of things create both last and first;  
 Added, that so from Adam's crime  
 Her Son might save the race accursed –  
 Decreed before the birth of time.

Hail, full of grace! To eyes of men  
 Light shows not mid excess of light:  
 Thy glory mocks th'angelic ken,  
 The peerless whiteness of thy white!

And yet 'twixt her and us but small  
 The distance: finite it must be.  
 'Twixt her and God the interval  
 Is evermore infinity.

**CHRIST'S VESTURE**

Strong in prayer! our spirits bind  
To God; our bodies keep from sin;  
Live in our hearts that Christ may find  
An incorrupt abode therein;

That He, th'Eternal Spirit, He  
Who overshadowed with His grace  
The depths of thy humility  
In us may have a resting-place.

Who love thee prosper! As a breeze  
Thou waft'st them o'er the ways divine:  
Strange heights they reach with magic ease  
Through music-moulded discipline.

If I but touch His vesture's hem  
I shall be healed, and strong, and free.  
Thou wert His vesture, Mary! them  
His virtue heals that reach to thee.

## THE GATE OF HEAVEN

They seek not, or amiss they seek,  
 The coward soul, the captious brain.  
 Of Love alone those instincts speak  
 Whose challenge never yet was vain.

True Gate of Heav'n! As light through glass,  
 That God who might not born of thee  
 Have come, was pleased to earth to pass  
 Through thine unstained Virginity.

Lo! thus, aright to know thy Son,  
 Through knowledge comes of thee in part:  
 Interior vision, Spirit-won,  
 High wisdom of the virgin heart.

Summed up in thee our hearts behold  
 The glory of created things:  
 From His, thy Son's, corporeal mould  
 Looks forth the eternal King of kings!

**THE BENIGN STAR**

Whate'er is floral on the earth  
To thee, O flower, of right belongs,  
Whate'er is musical in mirth,  
Whatever is jubilant in songs.

Childhood and springtide never cease  
For him thy freshness keeps from stain;  
Dew-drenched for him, like Gideon's fleece,  
The dusty paths of life remain.

For all high thoughts thou bring'st to mind,  
We love thee; love thee better yet  
For all that taint on human kind  
Thy brightness helps us to forget!

Hope, hope is strength! That smile of thine  
To us is glory's earliest ray!  
Through faith's dim air, thou star benign,  
Look down, and light our onward way!



## THE STAR OF THE SEA

I left at morn that blissful shore  
O'er which the fruit-bloom fluttered free,  
And sailed the wildering waters o'er  
Till sunset streaked with blood the sea.

My sleep the hoarse sea-thunders broke.  
Death-visaged cliffs, with feet foam-hid  
Leaned forth their brows through vapour-smoke,  
Like tower, and tomb, and pyramid.

In death-black shadow, ghostly white,  
The breaker raced o'er foaming shoals;  
From caverns cold as death all night  
Came wailings as of suffering souls.

At morn, through clearing mist the star  
Of ocean o'er the billow rose.  
Down dropped the elemental war:  
Tormented chaos found repose.

Star of the ocean, dear art thou –  
Ah! – not to sea- worn men alone:  
The suffering Church, when shines thy brow  
Upon her penance, stays her moan.

The holy souls draw in their breath;  
The sea of anguish rests in peace;  
And from beyond the gates of death  
Up swell the anthems of release.

**THE ROD OF AARON**

Blossom for ever, blossoming rod!  
Thou didst not blossom once, to die:  
That Life which issuing forth from God  
Thy life enkindled, runs not dry.

Without a root in sin-stained earth  
'Twas thine to bud salvation's flower:  
No single soul the Church brings forth  
But blooms from thee and is thy dower!

Rejoice, thou Eve! – thy promise waned;  
Transgression nipt thy flower with frost;  
But, lo! a mother man hath gained  
Holier than she in Eden lost.

## THE PROPHET-QUEEN

She took the timbrel, as the tide  
 Rushed, refluxed, down the Red Sea shore.  
 "The Lord hath triumphèd" she cried:  
 Her song rang out above the roar

Of lustral waves that wall to wall  
 Fell back upon that host abhorred.  
 Above the gloomy wat'ry pall,  
 As eagles soar, her anthem soared.

Miriam, rejoice! a mightier far  
 Than thou one day shall sing with thee!  
 Who rises, bright'ning like a star  
 Above yon bright baptismal sea?

That harp which David touched who rears  
 Heaven-high above those waters wide –  
 The prophet-queen! Throughout all years  
 She sings the triumph of the bride!

## THE TOWER OF DAVID

The towered city loves thee well,  
Strong tower of David's house! In thee  
She hails th'unvanquished citadel  
That frowns o'er Error's subject sea.

With magic might that tower repels  
A host that breaks where foe is none,  
No foe but statued saints in cells,  
High-ranged and smiling in the sun.

There stands Augustine; Leo there;  
And Bernard with a maiden face  
Like John's; and, strong at once and fair,  
That Spirit-Pythian, Athanase.

Upon thy star-surrounded height  
God's angel keepeth watch and ward,  
And sunrise flashes thence ere night  
Hath left dark street and dewy sward.

## THE VANQUISHER OF ERROR

The watchman watched along the walls,  
And lo! an hour or more ere light  
Loud rang his trumpet. From their halls  
The revellers rushed into the night.

There hung a terror on the air;  
There moved a terror under ground;  
The hostile hosts, heard everywhere,  
Within, without, were nowhere found.

"The Christians to the lions! Ho!"  
Alas! self -tortured crowds, let be!  
Let go your wrath; your fears let go:  
Ye gnaw the net, but cannot flee.

Ye drank from out Orestes' cup;  
Orestes' Furies drave you wild.  
Who conquers from on high? Look up!  
A woman, holding forth a Child!

## THEOTOKOS

What tenderest hand uprears on high  
 The standard of Incarnate God?  
 Successive portents that deny  
 Her Son, who tramples? – She who trod

Long since on Satan! Who were those  
 That, age by age, their Lord denied?  
 Their seats they set with Mary's foes:  
 They mocked the mother as the bride.

Of such was Arius, and of such  
 He whom the Ephesian sentence felled.\*  
 Her Title triumphed.\*\* At the touch  
 Of Truth th'insurgent rout was quelled.

Back, back the hosts of Hell were driv'n  
 As forth that sevenfold thunder rolled.  
 And in the Church's mystic heaven  
 There was great silence, as of old.

\* Nestorius \*\*Theotokos, or, Deipara

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

As children when, with heavy tread,  
Men sad of face, unseen before,  
Have borne away their mother dead,  
So stand the nations thine no more.

From room to room those children roam,  
Heart-stricken by the unwonted black;  
Their house no longer seems their home;  
They search, yet know not what they lack.

Years pass. Self-will and passion strike  
Their roots more deeply, day by day;  
Old kinsmen sigh; and "how unlike"  
Is all the tender neighbours say.

And yet at moments, like a dream,  
A mother's image o'er them flits;  
Like hers their eyes a moment beam;  
The voice grows soft, the brow unknits.

Such, Mary, are the realms once thine  
That know no more thy golden reign.  
Hold forth from heaven thy Babe divine!  
Make these thine orphans thine again!

## THE SONG OF SONGS

O that the wordy war might cease,  
Self-sentenced Babel's strife of tongues!  
Loud rings the arena. Athletes, peace!  
Nor drown the wild-dove's Song of Songs.

Alas, the wand'ers feel their loss:  
With tears they seek – ah! seldom found –  
That peace whose volume is the Cross;  
That peace which leaves not holy ground.

Mary, the peaceful soul loves thee!  
A happy child not taught of scribes  
He stands beside the Church's knee,  
From her the lore of Christ imbibes.

Hourly he drinks it from her face,  
For there his eyes, he knows not how,  
The face of Him she loves can trace,  
And, crowned with thorns, the sovereign brow.

“Behold! all colours blend in white!  
Behold! all truths have root in love!”  
So sings, half lost in light of light,  
Her Song of Songs, the mystic Dove.



**LOVE'S HARVEST**

In vain thine altars do they heap  
With blooms of violated May  
Who fail the words of Christ to keep,  
Thy Son who love not, nor obey.

Their songs are as a serpent's hiss;  
Their praise a poniard's poisoned edge;  
Their offering taints, like Judas' kiss,  
The shrine; their vows are sacrilege.

Sadly from such thy count'nance turns:  
Thou canst not stretch thy Babe to such,  
Albeit for all thy pity yearns,  
As greet Him with a leper's touch.

Who loveth thee must love thy Son;  
Weak love grows strong thy smile beneath;  
But nothing comes from nothing; none  
Can reap love's harvest out of death.

## THE SLEEP OF STORM

I toiled along the public path.  
 Loud rang the booths with knave and clown.  
 Now laughter-peals, now cries of wrath  
 Assailed the suburb from the town.

Pleasure, the kennel Circe, brimmed  
 Her cup for him that passed. Hard by  
 Sabbathless labour, dust-begrimed  
 Alternated the curse and sigh.

"Alas," I said, "no God is here!  
 The world, the flesh, rule here confessed."  
 I heard a voice; an angel near  
 On sailed; an altar touched his breast.

He placed it by me, and I knelt;  
 Clamour and shout and dust were gone.  
 I prayed, and in my prayer I felt  
 The peace of God, and heard, "Walk on;

Walk on; the lands this hour that sleep  
 A sleep of storm, shall wake to pray,  
 And, praying, rest; her feasts shall keep,  
 Their long, sad years thenceforth a May!"

**TRUE RELIGION'S TRIUMPH**

Come from the midnight mountain tops,  
The mountains where the panthers play.  
Descend! – the cowl of darkness drops;  
Come fair and fairer than the day!

Our hearts are wounded with thine eyes:  
They stamp thereon in words of light  
The mystery of the starry skies;  
The Name o'er ev'ry name they write.

Come from thy Lebanonian peaks  
Whose sacerdotal cedars nod  
Above the world when morning breaks –  
The mountain of the house of God.

Weakness and dream have passed like night;  
Religion claims her ancient bound,  
On-borne in venerable might,  
By lions hailed, and turret-crowned.

## THE REFUGE OF SINNERS

Say, who are those that beat with brands  
Like bandits on our palace-gate,  
That storm our keep like rebel-bands,  
That come like judgment, or like fate?

Say, who are those that spurn by night  
Our sumptuous floors with brazen shoon  
And banquet halls whose latest light  
Is lightning or a dying moon?

Say, who are those that by our bed  
Like giants tower in iron mail,  
That press against the prostrate head  
Their foot, and wind through heaven the flail?

The sins are these! Sin-pasturing past!  
How in thy darkness they have grown  
That seemed to die! How we at last  
To pigmy size have shrunk self-known!

Help, sinless Mother! Bid Him spare!  
He loves us more than Judge benign  
Than thou. 'Tis He that wills thy prayer:  
From Him it comes, that love of thine!

## THE UNKNOWN GOD

Behind this vast and wondrous frame  
Of worlds whereof we nothing know  
Except their aspect and their name,  
Beneath this blind, bewildering show

Of shapes that on the darkness trace  
Transitions fair and fugitive,  
Lies hid that Power upon Whose Face  
No child of man shall gaze and live.

Like one on purple heights that stands  
While mountain echoes round him roll  
Screening his forehead with his hands  
And following far through gulfs of soul

Some thought that still before him flies,  
Thus, Power eternal and unknown,  
We muse on Thine immensities,  
Yet find Thee in Thy Son alone.

Emmanuel, God with us, in Him  
We see th'unmeasured, and the Vast  
Like mountain outlines, large and dim,  
On lifted mists at sunrise cast.

The Word made Flesh! Power Divine,  
Through Him alone we guess at Thee,  
And deepliest feel that He is Thine  
When throned upon His Mother's knee.

## THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN

In some celestial realm we know  
The God-man keeps His court sublime  
As Adam ruled the sphere below  
In that first Eden's sinless prime.

He too, that second Adam, hears  
Those rivers four engird His bound:  
Serene advance of sleepless years  
With God's accomplished counsels crowned.

Around Him, close as Eden leaves,  
The souls consummate hang in trance;  
Like wind the Spirit among them weaves  
Eternal song, or through th'expanses

On-wafts – like snowy clouds high-piled  
Those pilgrims of God's trackless Will,  
The white hosts of the Undefined  
Whom love divine alone could fill.

The lustral mist for aye ascends;  
All creatures mix secure from strife;  
At last the Tree of Knowledge blends  
Its branches with the Tree of Life.

An Eve partakes that Eden. She  
Who decked His cradle shares His throne.  
The solitudes of Deity:  
These, these are His, and His alone.

## THE THRONE OF GOD

Each several Saint the Church reveres –  
 What is he but an altar whence  
 Some sep'rate virtue ministers  
 To God a sep'rate frankincense?

Each beyond each, not made of hands,  
 They rise a ladder angel-trod;  
 Star-bright the last and loftiest stands:  
 That altar is the throne of God.

Lost in the uncreated light  
 A form all human rests thereon:  
 His shade from that surpassing height  
 Beyond creation's verge is thrown.

Him "Lord of lords, and King of kings"  
 The chorus of all worlds proclaim:  
 "He took from her," one angel sings  
 At intervals, "His human frame."

## LET THE NATIONS RAGE

The sordid World, insane through pride,  
Masking her sin in virtue's name,  
Rejects, usurps – self-deified –  
The Immaculate Mother's sacred claim:

“The Earth is mine, and Earth's desires.  
My Science reigns from zone to zone.  
I warm my hands o'er Nature's fires;  
I reap the fields those hands have sown.

From depths unknown I crept unseen  
Through worm and beast to Man's estate.  
My hands are clean: I rule, a queen  
Immortal and immaculate.”

Thus boasteth Pride with brazen brow –  
That Pride which still believes a lie.  
The counter-boast of grace art thou  
Immaculate Humility!

Therefore, like western hill that flings  
O'er sunset vales its gradual shade,  
Thy power shall wax, while sensuous things  
Dissolve, and earthly grandeurs fade.

In the world's eve thy star shall flash  
Through reddening skies that cease to weep,  
While kings to earth their sceptres dash  
And angel bands the harvest reap.



**THE RAINBOW**

All-glorious shape that fleet'st wind-swept  
Athwart th'empurpled pine-girt steep,  
That, sinless, from thy birth hast wept,  
All-gladdening, till thy death must weep;

That in eterne ablution still  
Thine innocence in shame dost shroud,  
And, washed where stain was none, dost fill  
With light thy penitential cloud;

Illume with peace our glooming glen;  
O'er-arch with hope yon distant sea,  
To angels whispering, and to men,  
Of her, whose lowlier sanctity

In God's all-cleansing freshness shrined,  
Renounced all pureness of her own,  
And aye her lucent brow inclined,  
God's Handmaid meek, before His throne.

## THE QUEEN OF THE ANGELS

Angelic city in the skies  
 Not built of stones but Spirits pure,  
 Irradiate by the Eternal Eyes,  
 And in the Eternal Love secure;

Angelic city, selfless, chaste,  
 By Him thou watch'st upholden still;  
 That neither future know'st, nor past  
 Tranced in thy God's all-present Will:

Thy mind a mirror sphered of gold  
 Wherein alone His splendours shine;  
 Thy heart a vase His hand doth hold  
 That yields to Him alone its wine;

For one brief moment proved and tried;  
 Thenceforth man's help in trial's stress;  
 Bright sister of the Church the Bride:  
 The elder Sister, yet the less:

O like, unlike, ye crownèd Twain!  
 Celestial both, yet one terrene;  
 Behold, ye sing the same glad strain;  
 Ye glory in the self-same Queen!

**THE VIRGIN OF POWER**

Rough is the shock of adverse seas;  
Sudden the upsurge of a sect;  
Thou, like a vine, by soft degrees  
Didst root thyself in God's elect.

Slow like a palm-tree's was thy growth,  
But sure. The Sun that heals stood high  
Ere all thy greatness met, though loth,  
Smit by His beam, the general eye.

But like some western hill that flings  
O'er sunset vales at last its shade,  
Thy power shall wax when transient things  
Give place, and shapes ephem'ral fade.

In the world's eve thy star shall flash  
Through redd'ning skies that cease to weep,  
While kings to earth their sceptres dash,  
And angel bands the harvest reap.

# THE WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN

*Revelation 12:1, 14:5*

A Woman "clothèd with the sun,"  
Yet fleeing from the Dragon's rage!  
The strife in Eden-bowers begun  
Swells upward to the latest age.

That Woman's Son is throned on high;  
The angelic hosts before Him bend;  
The sceptre of His empery  
Subdues the worlds from end to end.

Yet still the sword goes through her heart,  
For still on earth His Church survives.  
In her that Woman holds a part,  
In her she suffers, and she strives.

Around her head the stars are set;  
A dying moon beneath her wanes;  
By Death hath Death been slain: and yet  
The Power Accurst awhile remains.

Break up, strong Earth, thy stony floors  
And snatch to penal caverns dun  
That Dragon from the pit that wars  
Against the Woman and her Son!

## EPILOGUE

I gazed; it was the Paschal night  
 In vision on the starry sphere;  
 Like suns the stars made broad their light:  
 Then knew I Earth to Heaven drew near.

The Thrones of Darkness down were hurled;  
 The veil was rent; the bond was riv'n:  
 Then knew I that Man's little world  
 Had reached its home: the heart of heaven.

Made strong by God, mine eyes with awe  
 Still roved from star-changed sun to sun  
 That ringed the earth in ranks, and saw  
 A spirit o'er each, that stood thereon.

And, clasped by every spirit, stood  
 More high, the venerable sign:  
 Then knew I that th'atoning Blood  
 Had reached that sphere, the Blood Divine.

From orb to orb an anthem passed:  
 "The Blessing of the Lord of All  
 Hath reached us from the least and last  
 Of stars that light the heavenly hall;

For He, that Greatest, loves the least;  
 Puts down the mighty; lifts the low.  
 On Earth began His bridal feast :  
 Our triumph is its overflow!"

Then Earth, that great "New Earth" foretold,  
Assumed those glories long her due –  
Or were they hers indeed of old  
Though veiled till then from mortal view? –

While with her changing far and wide  
Those worlds around her, blent in one –  
Became that City of the Bride  
Which needs no light of moon or sun.

Their splendour had not suffered change  
As, kened through myriad senses new,  
Self-radiant street, and columned range  
To one unmeasured Temple grew.

Ere long through all that throbbing frame  
Of things beheld and things unseen  
Rolled forth that Name which none can name  
Save those that breathe not clime terrene.

And down that luminous Infinite  
I saw an Altar and a Throne;  
And, near to each, a Form, all Light  
That, resting, moved, and moved alone;

But if He filled that Throne or knelt  
That Altar nigh, or lamb-like lay,  
I saw not. This I saw, and felt  
That Son of Man was God for aye.

That Son of God was Man, and stood,  
And from His vest, more white than snow,  
Slowly there dawned a Cross of Blood  
That through the glory seemed to grow.

Above the heavens His hands He raised  
To bless those worlds whose race was run,  
And lo! in either palm there blazed  
The blood-red sign of vict'ry won:

That Blood the Bethlehem shepherds eyed  
Warming His cheek Who slept apart:  
That Blood He drew, the Crucified,  
Far-fountained from His mother's heart.





## CODA

*Proverbs 1:31; 9:5*

If I could grasp at Truth at all,  
In your fine feast, sweet Irish bard,  
I'd eat my fill; but my own fall  
From Faith has made your muse's board

Beyond my reach, and only ash  
Stops up my mouth – from Dead Sea fruit  
I grabbed down here. I gnash my teeth;  
As I grub up fell's shrieking root:

My birthright sold, my mess it makes.  
Sin's fruitage taught what Adam knows:  
With swine the prodigal partakes.  
I'll go, then – glean where Wisdom sows.

Sophia's fare, her wind-doled meat –  
Her rations won't to poison turn.  
With new-washed hands I'll take, I'll eat,  
Refresh my soul, and lesson learn.

Spiced with sagacity your songs  
Will whet anew my appetite:  
Then grown upright and done with wrong  
I'll taste a fresh and chaste delight.

Phillip Medhurst 2013

